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Police and the Other America

By EFRAN MENNY

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In January, many witnessed the final moments of Keenan Anderson, a thirty-one year-old father and teacher, tased repeatedly by an officer of the Los Angeles Police Department. He died just hours later. When the incident went viral on social media, immediately my heart sank.

As an educational professional, I thought about the effect his death would have on his students, colleagues and school community. Losing a beloved teacher who is wholeheartedly dedicated to the mission of empowering our community is devastating. Also, as the country grapples with the embarrassing Black male teacher shortage, we lost an educator of remarkable character.

As it concerns justice, Anderson's death signifies the continual assault on the dignity of Black life in the US. As with many of the incidents with police killings, the footage reveals an utter lack of regard for addressing the ingrained disenfranchisement of Black Americans. It highlights the divide that has always existed in the country. Many would argue that the related experiences and outcomes are tantamount to living in an entirely different country with entirely different standards.

As Martin Luther King Jr. Day came and went, our nation reflected on this extraordinary global figure. Conservatives pivoted to a post-racial snippet from only one speech that would absolve the nation of its racism. On the other hand, liberals elevated his profound social influence but failed to capture the essence of his message.

Like other Black leaders of his era, such as Fred Hampton and Malcolm X, King was knowledgeable about the intersection of capitalism, classism and racism. As a result, he knew that solidarity among oppressed people was essential for advancing progress for human rights and ensuring a robust social democracy that distributed wealth and opportunity equitably.

In the post-Civil Rights era, King delivered one of his most impassioned speeches, "The Other America." In this groundbreaking exhortation to the country, he emphasized the chasm of economic opportunity for the nation's Black and poorest members, the injustice of continued racial inequality, and even denounced the growing military-industrial complex.

When addressing the standing struggle for the fate of Blacks and whites, he enlightened the conscience of the country about the interdependence of the struggle for justice. "Integration must be seen also in political terms where there is shared power, where Black men and white men share power together to build a new and a great nation."

When I think about the tragic death and short life of my fellow Black teacher Keenan Anderson, I wonder: where is the massive outrage from non-Black voices? In the Kingian perspective, if our fate is intertwined and our justice hinges on a mutual upholding, we need non-Black voices—including Christians and others of goodwill—to clamor with a resounding condemnation at this moment.

From a historical perspective, various groups have been at the forefront of receiving monetary and social gains from the American project, while Black Americans consistently have been at the back of the line waiting for residual



Man of Sorrows

Michelle Dick

crumbs of social progress. Other groups have amassed privilege, status and acceptance in extraordinary ways since their journey to the US. It's with this truth that we recognize our need for authentic allies to use their power and privilege to dismantle and abolish systems that harm not just Black residents but everyone.

Even with his vision of a unified struggle, King acknowledged that striving for "genuine equality" was challenging work. At the root of this challenge is seeing our neighbor with intrinsic worth and dignity. From this perspective, once we see our neighbor as someone imbued with sacredness, the obligation to provide access to a fair share of resources and justice follows.

Favoring the rich, economic deprivation, systemic racism, poor access to high-quality housing and education, and police brutality are offenses to the human person made in the image of God. These issues were present during King's era and in our post-integration society; they're equally pressing today. If we genuinely proclaim the inherent value of the human, yet disregard their predicament, our adherence to the greatest commandment has been a superficial act of devotion.

Even with a powerful faith that compels us to service and stewardship, the other America showcases our division. In fear of being associated with our struggle and condition, many don't want to be linked to Black Americans. No one wants to come onto our side of the tracks. With cases like Keenan's, when we could effect wide-scale accountability and criminal justice overhaul, our struggle falls on deaf ears.

Catholics like to boast about the incredible social teaching of the Church, but what's stopping this social doctrine from reaching the communities and the collective struggle for the proper allocation of resources and power to

Black Americans? The same apathy that existed in King's day reigns over our country today. Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio has affirmed that moving beyond King's message involves a commitment to addressing the social, medical, and economic disparities that exist. This powerful exhortation for gospel infused justice could be the catalyst for action.

King realized that a multiracial, multireligious and multigenerational allegiance was foundational for ushering in equality and macro-level change. In keeping with his vision for Black liberation, King would be appalled by the constant modern assault on Black life. He would implore the nation to wake up, adhering to a higher law of obedience that sees Black Americans as deserving of justice.

King's unwavering dedication to the social, economic and political rights of his people is inseparable from that vision. Though the holiday has passed this year, the legacy, vision and ministry of Dr. King are present here and now. He dedicated his life to the advancement of the core belief that Black Lives Matter.

By abandoning a desire for substantial and effective systemic change for the well-being of Black Americans, the status quo prevails. By rejecting the call to be salt and light, the continual shadow of being the recipient of the cold-shoulder by many lay people and clergy in the Church persists. To authentically be an ambassador for Dr. King, Black Catholics demand that the Body of Christ emulate his aim for comprehensive overhaul of America's institutions.

If we want to follow in Dr. King's steps, advocating for Keenan Anderson and other slain Black brothers and sisters, we must confess that empowering their community is how we deconstruct the other America. ❖

Guantánamo Is Still Open

By FRIDA BERRIGAN

[Published by *Waging Nonviolence*, January 14, 2023—Eds. note]

The prison that started out as a provisional, secret, slapdash gulag on the lee side of the Cuban state of Guantánamo is now a rebar-enforced institution with hundreds of millions of dollars flowing into it every year for a dwindling but entrenched population. It survives despite Supreme Court rulings against it, the accumulation of literally millions of billable hours by some of the best legal minds in the United States and Europe, decades of fervent, smart and courageous protest, and four presidents.

Witness Against Torture is a small part of the protest movement to close the prison. We were founded in 2005, when twenty-five of us went to Cuba with the plan of marching to Guantánamo to see the prisoners. In the process, we would publicly violate the Bush administration's travel-related bans on Cuba and have an opportunity to draw attention to the treatment of "war on terror" prisoners. Denied entry to the US Naval base at Guantánamo that at the time held more than 700 Muslim men and boys captive, we fasted and held a twenty-four hour-a-day vigil for five days, organized a press conference, called the base demanding to be let in, and ultimately left vowing to return.

Once back in the United States, we heard through their lawyers that the men at Guantánamo were aware of our protest and presence and that their hopes were renewed by our efforts. We then decided to focus our attention on state-side activism to ensure that the people in the US did not ignore the plight of these men.

We have been doing that ever since, organizing yearly mobilizations in Washington, DC around Jan. 11, the date in 2002 that the first plane load of men arrived shackled and blindfolded at Guantánamo. Each year, we fast, don orange jumpsuits, organize spectacle and disruption and public prayer to draw attention to the criminality of labeling Muslim men and boys our enemy, visiting gross violence against their persons, refusing them due process, and wrapping it all in secrecy and euphemism—then telling people that these actions are carried out in the name of US national security.

We returned to Cuba in 2015, in the twilight of the Obama administration, to give him one big push to do the right thing before moving out of the Oval Office. But nothing followed.

We were back in DC this January for the first time since 2020. It was good to be together, masked and a much smaller circle, but in person, within arms reach. We gathered to be a visible reminder to the US public that Guantánamo is still open, still a crime, still an affront to humanity.

On January 9th, we joined the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker community for their Monday morning vigil, a discipline they have held since 1987. We were twenty-five strong, wearing orange jumpsuits and carrying an array of well-worn signs, some dating back to the early days of our movement. In a single file, wreathed in a disciplined silence, we stood on the escalator as it slowly moved our group out of the depths of the station and into the early morning half light at the Pentagon.

(continued on page 7)

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Baby Doe Lazarus 1939-2022

By BERNARD CONNAUGHTON

Joseph O'Donnell was a son of Francis O'Donnell, a man who had worked closely with Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in the early years of the Catholic Worker. I met Joe at Maryhouse many years ago when he brought his children there to visit. He was an intense, friendly, fighting-Irish kind of man whose anger once flared up at me as we talked about the pro-life movement—his passion. He spent many years witnessing outside abortion clinics; he met with clinic owners to establish dialogue. He went to jail. Once, after being arrested and jailed, he lost his front teeth at the hands of the authorities. He paid a price.

I lost touch with Joe until I began to visit him a couple of years ago at his apartment in Brooklyn. By then his health had begun to fail and he was basically confined to his neighborhood. The wide-brimmed black hat he wore, his crutch and his patched together clothing gave him the bearing of a prophet. To show his solidarity with the unborn and the poor, he had changed his legal name to Baby Doe Lazarus. A lot had happened in the intervening years.

He told me that when he could no longer afford his rent, which had been increased by three hundred dollars per month, he was evicted and became homeless for a period. He learned to survive on the street. He was poor and he mixed with poor people. He eventually got another small studio apartment on the ground floor of a building in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn.

Visits with Lazarus were never dull. He loved the Catholic Worker and would introduce me as an editor to store clerks, transit workers, and neighbors and tell them to come visit one of the houses. "Write this address down," he'd say. "Ask for Joanne Kennedy." He was a true evangelist, and I was humbled by his genuine zeal. I watched him walk up to people he didn't know, extend his hand and say, "God bless you." And people seemed pleased. "Life is short," he told me when I asked him how he did it.

Lazarus refused to accept a government check. The bodega owner across from his house was always giving him food. I saw people get out of their car to give him a few

dollars. He knew the drug dealers and they too helped him. His family and friends had food and clothing delivered to him.

He had an inquiring, lively intellect and enjoyed engaging rabbis in his neighborhood about religious ideas. He loved studying the Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith. And it was the Muslim people, especially the ones who gave him food, whose faith and hospitality greatly impressed him.

Lazarus had great affection for Dorothy Day, whom he had known since his childhood, and he would visit her occasionally over the years. He liked to tell the story about one of those visits when he put himself in the middle of an argument between two other people in the dining room, and Dorothy motioned him over to her. "Sweetheart," she said, "don't you know these people are crazy?"

There was something of the hermit in Lazarus. He had a stubborn, defiant streak which made it perhaps better for him to live by himself. Except that he liked people, and he liked to talk and often called Maryhouse or St. Joseph House. Lazarus was a complex person. I haven't even mentioned how beautifully he played the piano or the ukulele. Or that one of his favorite songs was "Ticket to Heaven" by Dire Straits.

For the last few years of his life, Lazarus needed a urinary catheter which caused chronic pain and discomfort; there were many hours in emergency rooms because of it. He spent the last months of his life at Calvary, a hospice for cancer patients in the Bronx. At first it was hard for him to be there. "I don't know how to die," he told me. But his interactions with the nurses and aides and cleaning staff there showed the deep appreciation he always had for workers. It was ordinary often unrecognized people he was drawn to the most. At Calvary, the feelings were mutual.

"When I get to heaven," Lazarus once told me, "if God is not a Black grandmother, I'm coming back."

"May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs receive you at your arrival and lead you to the holy city Jerusalem. May choirs of angels receive you and with Lazarus, who once was poor, may you have eternal rest."

—In paradisum

Catholic Worker European Gathering

May 17th-21st, 2023

Wijhe, The Netherlands.

For more information please contact Herman van Veelen at
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MARYHOUSE

By CATHY BREEN

We Lived Happily During the War
And when they bombed other
people's houses, we
protested but not enough, we opposed them,
but not
enough. I was
in my bed, around my bed America
was falling: invisible house by
invisible house by invisible
house—
I took a chair outside and watched the sun.
In the sixth month
of a disastrous reign in the house of
money
in the street of money in the
city of money in the country
of money,
our great country of money, we
(forgive us)
lived happily during the war.

—Ilya Kaminsky

You might ask yourself what does this poem have to do with Maryhouse? I am asking myself the same thing. Last night I was asked if I would write the house column for this issue. Oh no, was my first reaction. Struggling these last months—the last couple of years actually—with a deep sense of gloom and despair, I wondered how I could possibly write about our house. "No" is often my first reaction to a request. But later I turned on my bedside lamp and began to write. And write. And write.

I feel I could easily have written the above poem. I spend too much time laying on my bed feeling paralyzed and wondering what to do with the rest of my life. From the poet Padraig OTuama in his book *Poetry Unbound*, I learn that Ilya Kaminsky is a deaf man, a refugee from Odessa who sought asylum in the US after the Russian invasion of the Ukraine in 2022. "A devastating poem about complicity" is how Padraig describes this poem.

Having experienced firsthand, in some measure, the destruction of Iraq and its people by the US, not to mention Afghanistan, the poem causes my heart to stop. I am aware that in great part my sadness comes from our unwillingness as a country to take responsibility for our actions, but also our indifference to the ongoing suffering in Iraq. The incessant coverage on the war in the Ukraine only emphasizes the abysmal US reporting on Iraq these last twenty years.

I also thought about how dramatically Maryhouse has changed in the twenty-five years I have lived here. In many ways it is unrecognizable. Back then the house was full. Morning shifts began at seven in the morning, and closing time was at ten at night. Not only were there no empty rooms, but we had guests living in the library. We never knew how many people were under the bedcovers strewn over the floor! A formerly homeless woman guest was homeless in our house for years because she couldn't fit into her room. Some things, like collecting items, do not change! There were always people around, a-coming and a-going. Because there were so many more people in the house, there were buffers, people to defuse arguments, people

joking and bantering. Eugene and I used to play rummy in the afternoons. He and Roger O'Neil were known throughout the neighborhood with their pushcarts foraging for donations, always helping others.

Fast forward to the present day and there are fewer people around except during the lunchtime hours when we serve. There are empty rooms, which is especially painful in the winter when women we know are sleeping in the streets or asking if they can move in. It is always hard to turn people away. We take "a chair outside and watch the sun."

About five months ago I stepped down from doing morning house shifts of cooking and serving, helping navigate the shower schedule, etc. My legs were protesting the long hours of standing and the multiple flights of stairs. I turned seventy-five in January. At Maryhouse we serve four days a week and we have two new live-in young volunteers who bring a new energy to our community. I sorely miss the cooking. The aromas, the colors, and the chopping of vegetables were my primary contact with nature. And I miss the interaction that working in the kitchen brings with it in any home.

One bright spot is that the women are coming back inside to eat after two and a half years of being served lunch at the door. Despite Covid-19 still being among us, the masks have come off for the most part. But there are many less women. We have a steady flow of young people wanting to volunteer. Another bright spot is that we have started up the Friday Night Meetings again.

So what might the Spirit be trying to communicate? Jacques Maritain says in his *Journal de Raïssa*, "The Holy Spirit is not at work only in durable institutions which last through the centuries, [She] is also at work in ventures that have no future, which have always to be begun again."

And it is not only the challenges of community that wear us down, there are the unending drumbeats of the wars we are involved in, there are homeless in our neighborhood laying on the street alongside the bars and trendy restaurants. People walk by, looking straight ahead. Is the person even breathing? There are the unprecedented number of suicides and deaths at Rikers Island, the migrant crisis, the lack of housing. There is the lack of resources for those with mental illness. The anger that we see on the streets and in the subways, and in our houses. It is another type of war—"in the street of money in the city of money in the country of money, we (forgive us) lived happily during the war."

We are all seeking a life of joy and renewal. We are in the school of life. Too often the divisions among us and the bickering are what sap our strength and cause folks to hide away. It seems that we are being challenged to be present to one another in a new way, so that we can, perhaps, invite new residents into the house. As Dorothy wrote in her diaries: "The hard work of loving. That is our CW work. Learning to love, exercising our love so it grows strong."

FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS

In keeping with Peter Maurin's recognition of the need for ongoing clarification of thought, we invite you to join us for our weekly Friday Night Meetings. The meetings are held at Maryhouse, 55 East Third St., between First and Second Avenues. Feel welcome to call and confirm the schedule (212) 777-9617. Masks will be available.

Mar. 24Oscar Romero—Readings and Reflections.

Mar. 31Jason Steidl: Building a Bridge? LGBTQ Catholics and the Church.

Apr. 7Good Friday—No Meeting.

Apr. 14Peace Agreement in the North of Ireland—Twenty-five Years of Tranquility?

Apr. 21Paul Wasserman: Worker Co-ops in Argentina.

Apr. 28Tom Goldscheider: David Ruggles—Black Abolitionist & the Underground Railroad.

May 5Daniel Akst: Pacifism, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker.

May 12Liam Myers: Saved by Beauty—An evening of Art and Music.

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 8:00 PM

Cooperatives & Christianity

By RENEE DARLINE RODEN

[Published with permission from *Sojourners*, www.sojo.net December 7, 2022—Eds. note]

Cooperatives are all around us. You may recognize the names of these cooperatives: Land O'Lakes, Ocean Spray, Blue Diamond Growers, and REI. Cooperatives, according to the International Cooperative Alliance, are businesses that are democratically run by the owners—one person, one vote. There are no majority owners. There are no outside shareholders. There are no hostile takeovers. And many people of faith are turning to cooperatives as an alternative to the dehumanizing economics of capitalism. "I've realized that the current state of economics is violence, since it violates human dignity," said Dani Bodette, senior coordinator of Catholic Campaign for Human Development in Chicago. "But cooperatives are a form of nonviolence—they're a nonviolent economics."

In 1995, the International Cooperative Alliance adopted the current seven principles that guide cooperatives: voluntary and open membership, democratic governance, member participation in the cooperative's capital, autonomy, education, cooperation among cooperatives, and communal concern. Some cooperatives, like Land O'Lakes or Ocean Spray, are cooperatives of farmers who band together to sell a product. Some, like REI, are consumer-owned cooperatives, where people can pay thirty dollars for a lifetime membership fee, receive discounts on products, and vote for the company's board of directors.

A growing number of cooperatives are worker-owned, meaning the laborers own the company collectively, rather than a single owner, a family or outside shareholders controlling the company. There are over 600 worker-owned cooperatives in the United States, with nearly 6,000 workers, according to a 2021 report by the Democracy at Work Institute and the US Federation of Worker-Owned Cooperatives. The number of cooperatives has grown by over thirty percent in the past three years, according to Fifty by Fifty, a cooperative advocacy organization.

The internal structures of co-ops push them toward the equity that is lacking in US businesses. Worker-owned cooperatives on average have a top-to-bottom pay ratio of 2:1, according to the Democracy at Work report. Meanwhile, the average CEO in a non-cooperative business in the US makes 351 times what a typical worker makes. And the report found that, unlike shareholder-owned businesses, worker-owned cooperatives prioritized retaining workers during the pandemic, even as revenues dropped.

In contrast to the nature of the United States' capitalist economic system, cooperatives put capital in the hands of the workers

and the community, rather than owners who compete. And many faith communities are supporting this alternative economy.

Dani Bodette attended a talk at St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Church in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood about the Chicago Market, a consumer-owned grocery co-op opening around the corner from the church. At the meeting, the roughly twenty participants learned about the food co-op, the history of cooperatives, and Catholicism's role in fostering cooperative principles. It reflected a focus on cooperatives in the broader Catholic church. Pope Francis has championed cooperatives and alternative economies. In the appeal at the beginning of his Economy of Francesco initiative, Pope Francis called on young people, "to set in place a new economic model, the fruit of a culture of communion based on fraternity and equality."



Lavrans Nielsen

Like Pope Francis, Dan Arnett, Chicago Market's general manager, finds inspiration in cooperatives because they honor the human dignity of the worker. And they promote a new kind of economic life. Instead of an exploitative economy based on maximizing profits for a small number of owners by extracting as much labor as possible, and giving as little as possible to the worker in return, cooperatives show the practicality and sustainability of giving a worker ownership of their labor. Cooperatives demonstrate the financial wisdom of a reciprocal economy: the wisdom of sharing, giving and building together. And faith groups are seeing the pastoral and spiritual necessity of organizing a more humane economy.

Faith-based communities across the country are turning to cooperatives in order to apply the fundamental beliefs of their faith to economic life. Many are seeing a theological mandate in Christian scripture to build what the Southeast Center for Cooperative Development a nonprofit dedicated to building a cooperative economy in the Southeastern United States calls the "solidarity economy." "We have the need to collaborate with others, not compete, and find win-win solutions," said Benny Overton, co-executive director of the Center.

Benny Overton, also a longtime union worker and former union president, said the center sprang out of the work of Nashville Organized for Action and Hope, an interdenominational coalition of churches and labor nonprofits. In 2015, the coalition hosted a conference on cooperative economics and how a solidarity economy could reverse rising wealth inequality in the region.

"We have seen gentrification uproot families and cultures," said Overton. "Those with money and power get the land. And the speculative market has placed housing out of the reach of most people." Over 150 community members attended the conference in 2015. Overton and his co-founder Rosemarie Rieger saw this interest as a mandate to do more. "We decided that we needed to create the Southeast Center for Cooperative Development to support people who have been left out of the economy," Rieger said in an email.

The Southeast Center for Cooperative Development offers education opportunities about cooperative principles and Bible studies about cooperatives for church communities. The center serves as a cooperative incubator, offering microfinancing loans for cooperatives in their region. They also work with local churches to help turn unused church buildings into affordable housing co-ops. "Churches have a renewed sense of mission post-Covid-19, and they're looking for ways to use their land to make a difference," Overton said.

Marjorie Kelly is a senior fellow at The Democracy Collaborative, a research institute for a more sustainable and equitable society. Kelly sees investing in cooperatives as a powerful means to transform capitalism into something less rapid and more productive. She said faith groups have been integral to the ideas of co-ops. "Faith-based organizations were the players who started the idea of socially responsible investing," Kelly said. Religious organizations, especially women religious, still carry on the tradition of investing in a sustainable

circles." Their inaugural five-month program in the spring of 2022 featured two Zoom communities, each community comprised of ten faith leaders and organizers.

During the 2022-2023 academic year there are three solidarity circles, each comprised of a dozen faith communities and community organizers who meet once a month. Faith communities share project ideas to promote the solidarity economy in their community. A Lutheran pastor in Memphis, for example, started a childcare cooperative for parishioners and their neighbors.

The members of the solidarity circles read literature on cooperatives and the solidarity economy, listen to lectures from cooperative experts, and get training in community organizing. But Aaron Stauffer, who coordinates the solidarity circle program for Wendland-Cook, said that building relationships is by far and away the most important thing they do. "People are over-resourced but under-connected, especially when it comes to critiques of capitalism in the church," Stauffer said.

Even when pastors can see the economy is not set up for working people to succeed, they may not know who to talk to or how to build something different, he said. But relationships, according to Stauffer, create a space to gather, organize and begin something new. Relationships provide hope, he said. Stauffer described the work of the solidarity circles as a "tilling of the ground." "We build relationships of solidarity and support that build a collective vision for how we can be together. And that imagination takes time," he said.

Rev. Larissa Romero, interim pastor of Presbyterian Downtown Church in Nashville, and current solidarity circle participant, said she is participating to "keep up with our [economic] reality." "All of our lives have been touched by the ravages of capitalism," she said. "And with the climate crisis looming, we can see the way capitalism hurts communities already on the margins—the communities I'm serving." Romero said that the solidarity circle has been a way to meet with likeminded pastors and organizers, learn community-organizing tactics, and provide hope for creating "the kingdom of God on earth."

Joerg Rieger, the director of the Wendland-Cook program, sees democratic workplaces and worker-owned cooperatives as deeply in tune with how God created humanity. To Rieger, cooperatives show the *imago dei* in each person. "We talk about people being created in God's image," he said, and he finds human agency and creativity reveals the image of a creative God in the human person. "For me, *imago dei* has a lot to do with how we think about God as a creator and humans as co-creators," he said. And the cooperative economy is the economic life that best reveals that creative image. It is "How we work together and how, together, we shape the world." ✠

"How can the worker get back to the ownership of property unless he has a wage which will enable him eventually to become an owner; a wage sufficient to let him save not only for education of the children, for sickness, for old age, but for ownership. And ownership not only of the homes but of the means of production which does not necessarily mean large factories.

I believe that in the constitutions of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers there is a clause which points to one of their aims: the ownership by the workers of the means of production. A truly Catholic aim...."

—Dorothy Day, CW March 1947

"In 1919 the Bishops announced that they could not be satisfied 'so long as the majority of workers remain mere wage earners. The majority must somehow become owners, at least in part, of the instruments of production.' This reform was to be accomplished in two ways.

First through cooperatives. The societies envisioned were not only consumer co-ops, the leaguizing together of buyers to obtain the benefit of wholesale purchase but producer co-ops as well. The workers were to actually own the instruments of production upon which they produced and to control them communally.

Second, capitalist property institutions were to be basically changed in the direction of co-partnership. This was originally seen as the worker owning stock and taking a reasonable part in management decisions...."

—Michael Harrington, CW October 1952



Lavrans Nielsen

Rosemary Radford Ruether

By JIM ROBINSON

Rosemary Radford Ruether's prophetic scholarship consistently emerged from the soil of personal experience, and it serves as a testimony to the liberating God that she attuned to and encountered. This living and life-giving God called her and calls us to radically transform our lives, our interpersonal relationships, and the systems in which our lives and relationships unfold. Ruether calls her readers to grapple with interlocking systems of domination—such as patriarchy, white supremacy and militarism—while envisioning the myriad alternatives that can emerge from their ruins.

For Ruether, Christians committed to the prophetic path of liberation must acknowledge and respond to the ways in which the Christian tradition has problematically served to sanction practices and systems of hierarchy, exclusion, and empire. At the same time, Ruether emphasizes that Christians can find in the prophetic tradition and in the Gospels "essential resources to unmask these very failures of religion" as well as "revelatory paradigms by which to construct a redeeming vision of an alternative humanity and world." Throughout **Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology**, Ruether insists that this prophetic-liberating tradition is not an alternative trajectory uncovered from the margins of the Bible but the "central tradition, the tradition by which Biblical faith constantly criticizes and renews itself and its own vision."

In her autobiography, **My Quests for Hope and Meaning**, Ruether describes in vivid detail a transformative visionary encounter that she had as a young woman. We can sense in this experience the seeds which would eventually blossom into her life-long project of generating theology that is both critical and constructive, drawing deeply from the Catholic tradition while challenging the status quo. She writes, "I remember sometime in my twenties focusing on whether or not I really believed that God existed, in the sense of a male person outside and ruling over the universe. At some point I had a vivid experience, something like a dream or visual hallucination. I experienced myself as standing in a great hall of a huge fortress. At the end of the hall was a staircase. I began to climb this staircase and found myself going up level after level of stairs, throwing open a door at the top of each level. Finally I reached what I knew was the top level. I sensed that inside was the throne room of God. With great excitement and nervousness, I threw open this door and saw inside a great room with a throne, but the throne was empty! I saw clearly that there was no God sitting on a throne in a throne-room at the top of a world system in the form of a hierarchical palace. Instead, I realized, the divine was quite different and existed elsewhere. God was a great nurturing and empowering energy that existed in and through all things, sustaining and renewing them. Although not in the image of a human person (not anthropomorphic) this true divinity was more maternal than paternal. The Great Mother or Holy Wisdom seemed the right title for Her. This was the divinity that was really there, that I experienced, could pray to, be in tune with and who represented the source of all that is. I realized that I never had really believed in God as an old man ruling from a throne in the skies. This founding divine energy of the Great Mother came to be my operative understanding of the divine. The matrix of mothers who had nurtured and empowered me as I grew up is the experiential base for this vision of the Great Mother."

Biography

Born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1936, Ruether was raised in a religiously plural household, by a Roman Catholic mother and an Episcopalian father. Her extended family included her Jewish uncle, David, as well as Quakers, Russian Orthodox Christians, and Unitarians, leading her to develop the sense that a "multiplicity of perspectives

living together has always seemed normal." Ruether has, throughout her life and career, "remain[ed] a Catholic as an ecumenical and interfaith Christian."

Ruether spent much of her early childhood in Washington DC, before moving to California with her mother and sisters following the death of her father. She was raised in spaces uniquely conducive to her empowerment as a critical thinking woman in a patriarchal Church and world. In her words, she "grew up in a series of matricentric enclaves led by intelligent, articulate, and self-confident women." By 1965, while raising three children with her husband Herman, Ruether completed her PhD in classics and patristics at the Claremont Graduate School.

That summer, she joined a group from Claremont on a trip to Mississippi, to work on a head-start program sponsored by the Delta Ministry. Through her participation in this program, Ruether entered into an embodied involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. This experience served, in Ruether's words, as a "crucial turning point in my social consciousness."

Ruether's commitment to racial justice, solidified by these experiences, continued to deepen and expand as she and her family moved to Washington DC in the summer of 1966, and she joined the faculty at Howard University. While at Howard, Ruether began to engage with the burgeoning fields of Black theology and Latin American liberation theology, while producing early works in feminist theology and ecological theology.

Ruether wrote her first talk on feminist theology, titled "Male Chauvinist Theology and the Anger of Women," in 1968. Her attunement to ecology emerged soon after, and she notes that, from the beginning, she "sought to connect ecology and feminism...." After more than a decade of teaching at Howard, she joined the faculty at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. She taught at Garrett for over twenty years, before ending her academic career at the Graduate Theological Union and Pacific School of Religion. On August 24, 2016, Rosemary Radford Ruether suffered from a very serious stroke. She died on May 21, 2022.

Thomas Merton

In August of 1966, as a twenty-nine year-old scholar living in DC and teaching at Howard, Ruether began an exchange of nearly forty letters with Thomas Merton. The entire collection of these letters was compiled and edited by Mary Tardiff, under the title **At Home in the World**. Ruether wrote her first letter to Merton on August 12, 1966, inspired by the positive feedback that he offered after reading one of her early essays. In this essay, Ruether advances a critique of the ways in which the institutional Church has co-opted and domesticated the living God, replacing the infinite Creator with an idol of power. She observes a dilemma unfolding, in which those who actively love the Church also find themselves actively resisting the twisted shapes that it has taken, and she argues that such a dilemma is perhaps felt most potently by the "prophetic young Catholic priest." This essay thoroughly moved Merton. In a July 25, 1966 journal entry, composed right after reading the essay, Merton records his feelings that Ruether's piece is a "remarkable—and dangerous!!—article," and he senses that "its implications will work in me for a long time."

In a letter composed on January 29, 1967, Merton writes that he "need[s] the help of a theologian" and he identifies Ruether as a "theologian I trust," and even "almost the only one." Merton writes, "I know this is a pretty bad letter (guilt about saying all this). But I do wonder at times if the Church is real at all. I believe it, you know. But I wonder if I am nuts to do so. Am I part of a great big hoax? I don't explain myself as well as I would like to: there is a real sense of and confidence in an underlying reality, the presence of Christ in the world which I don't doubt for an instant. But is that presence where we are all saying it is? We are all pointing (in various

directions), and my dreadful feeling is that we are all pointing wrong. Could you point someplace for me, maybe?"

Ruether replies by assuring Merton that she is "profoundly moved" by his letter. She sends Merton the manuscript of her book, **The Church Against Itself**, and notes that she grapples with many of Merton's questions directly within it. The Church, Ruether insists, is "surely not first of all the institution." For Ruether, the institutional structure serves as a vehicle for transmitting a set of traditions about a reality that is actively happening, but that is not exclusively or even centrally happening within the space of the institution; and that reality is "God's constant renewal of [God's] good creation." In **The Church Against Itself** Ruether insists that the authentic Church is "a happening." The authentic church is a vital, vibrant, and ever-evolving event, rather than a static institution.



Fritz Eichenberg

As their dialogue continues to unfold, in a March 1967 letter to Merton, Ruether mentions that she senses he is in a time of personal crisis. Merton responds four days later by affirming her suspicion, noting that she has "been the catalyst," and asking her to "be my confessor for a while: will you please?" As Merton opens up about his struggles at Gethsemani and in the wider Church with Ruether, including his profound friction with his abbot, Ruether replies by detailing her own personal situation. Though she continues to identify as a Catholic theologian, she has rooted herself and her family in an Episcopal parish in Washington, DC, St. Stephen and the Incarnation. She emphasizes the importance of working with institutions by finding or forming a niche within these institutions which is open to radical change and exploration. The goal, here, is to form an avant-garde, to remain rooted in the institution while also accompanying it and those involved in it into the future.

"An avant-garde is an avant for the sake of leading the rest, not leaving them behind," she insists. Throughout their exchange, Ruether presses Merton to consider leaving Gethsemani and linking his presence and energies to activist efforts in the city. She insists that the city is the "kingdom" frontier of history" and the authentic place in which one resists the status quo and renews creation. Ruether ultimately proposes in a letter sent to Merton in May of 1967 that Christians "should neither obey nor disobey" existing institutional structures, but instead should "move out into a new and more authentic possibility," and she suggests "I think that is what you are working on in your context too."

To read more about their exchange please

see my full essay, "The Age of Rosemarys: Thomas Merton's Engagement with Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Haughton." (**The Merton Annual** 32)

Ecology and Justice

In **Laudato si'**, Pope Francis articulates a vision of "integral ecology," which aims to account for the holistic link between environmental and social justice. While Francis attends to the connection between ecology and justice throughout the encyclical, he does not explicitly address the ecological and social impact of such vast systems of domination as patriarchy and systemic racism. While Francis's vision of integral ecology is inspiring and generative, it can continue to evolve and expand by pairing it with vital insights from activists and theologians such as Ruether. Since the 1970s, Rosemary Radford Ruether has offered a robust analysis of the inextricable link between social injustice and environmental degradation. In the process, we might experiment with embodying and articulating what we might call—inspired by insights and language developed by Kimberlé W. Crenshaw—an intersectional integral ecology.

In **New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation**, Ruether argues that "an ecological revolution must overthrow all the social structures of domination." Throughout the text, Ruether addresses the ways in which various social systems of domination intertwine in bringing about environmental degradation and social injustice. With Ruether in mind, Elina Vuola observes the "early inclusion of what is today called intersectionality" in the work of first-generation feminist theologians. Vuola points specifically to Ruether's **New Woman, New Earth** as an example of how early feminist theologians argued that "gender should always be analyzed in relation to race and class." In this text, Ruether calls for a deeper awareness of the "interstructuring of race, sex and class." For Ruether, racism and sexism should be evaluated as "interstructural elements of oppression within the overarching system of domination by white males."

In **To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism**, Ruether continues to explore these themes, asserting that "social domination is the missing link in the question of domination of nature." For Ruether, the domination of nature has always included "dominated bodies, the dominated labor of women, [enslaved people], peasants and workers." Throughout her work, Ruether analyzes how systems of domination promote the subjugation of the natural world as well as particular human beings. In **Religious Feminism and the Future of the Planet**, co-authored with Buddhist feminist Rita M. Gross, Ruether observes that "we are not born into an ethically neutral world," but a world that has been warped by "systems of injustice such as sexism, racism, class inequality, militarism, and exploitation of the earth."

In **Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing**, Ruether calls for the construction of what she terms "base communities of celebration and resistance." Such communities can be places where the work of resisting systems of domination such as patriarchy, white supremacy, and militarism coincides with profound celebrations of the radical goodness of creation. Such communities can serve as circles in which a more just and sustainable pattern of being is imagined and incarnated. As Ruether has it, "the struggle to change the death system must be deeply rooted in joy in the goodness of life."

For Ruether, such communities offer three key contributions. First, they shape the spiritual and ritual practices that stimulate love of life. Second, they engage with local institutions to construct "pilot projects of ecological living." And third, they emanate out through networks that aim to mobilize resistance to systems of domination. Through more intentionally aligning our energies with concrete communities of celebration and resistance, we can begin to bridge the gap between ideals (such as the concept of integral ecology) and embodied practices, as well as the gap between personal conversion and collective transformation.

✦

BOOK REVIEW

SAND TALK: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World by Tyson Yunkaporta. HarperOne, San Francisco, California, 2021. Reviewed by Liam Myers.

"Sometimes I wonder if echidnas ever suffer from the same delusion that many humans do, that their species is the intelligent center of the universe." If you, like myself, are not familiar with the small animal known as the echidna, it may be helpful to know that it is nicknamed the spiny anteater. If you, unlike myself, do not know why this review is beginning with considering the echidna, it is because *Sand Talk* begins in this way. And finally if you are wondering how this book could possibly begin by comparing humans, with our bigger brains, opposable thumbs, and sense of reason, with this little spiny animal, let "us-two" wonder together.

with the overflowing wisdom of Yunkaporta. A key theme that emerges from this wisdom is the notion that we are a custodian species. Yunkaporta asks us to recognize that we are a custodian species "rather than an owner of lands, communities, or knowledge." He contends that this would require both "relinquishing artificial power" and an "immersion in the astounding patterns of creation." In order to take this seriously we are asked to give up powers we think we hold and to place ourselves in a deeper relationship with creation. To become a custodian species is to recognize connections and patterns within our world, within our place. Yunkaporta tells us that to rejoin our custodian species we must be like our place. "Being in profound relation to place changes everything about you — your voice, your smell, your walk, your morality."

The importance of recognizing patterns, and making connections is a major theme in *Sand Talk*. In order to begin we must pay attention, and then we can "look beyond the things and focus on the connections between them." Yunkaporta tells us that "the first step in connectedness is forming pairs with multiple other agents who also pair with others." The work of doing this is to learn that we are not connected to everything, but we are connected to something, and those things which we connect to are connected as well, beyond us.

To notice connections we must each slow down and look around as we walk through our day. We can look at and touch the things we might pass hurriedly on our daily commute. Perhaps we could notice this tree, or that bird, or the building outside our window which construction workers were loudly working on all last night. Then we can spend a few minutes allowing the trees, the birds, the building, to share their time honored wisdom with us. After a few days we might make a connection. Once we have made this connection, and only then can we enter into the ecosystem of connections of that tree, this bird, the building outside our window. Allowing ourselves to sink into this entangled world in which we live will allow us to live more authentically. In this journey of paying attention, and thereby fostering our ability to make connections, us-two remember that this is slow work which we are only beginning to do. "It would take centuries to transform from human domestication and recover our exceptional physical and mental powers as a custodial species."

It is not often that a book will change the way that I look out into the world, or how I step through life, but *Sand Talk* did this for me. As I was reading and reviewing, I noticed that this book does not have a table of contents or footnotes or endnotes. At first I was frustrated by this. I was raised with the misguided presumption that everything had to be kept in a nicely packaged objective container, and the academic container where books live states that books have a table of contents! My own wrestling with this minor frustration illustrates the way in which *Sand Talk* takes the reader on a deep journey that challenges us-two to confront the ways of being and knowing which we have been taught.

This book presents us-two with this mess of our modern era wherein most of us spend a third of our lives at work, a third of our lives asleep, and the remaining third commuting, maintaining our health, and attempting to connect with loved ones. Within all of this it surely is "difficult to find the mental space to question systems of power." Yunkaporta challenges us to think about what we actually want. He emphatically states that jobs are not what we want. "We want shelter, food, strong relationships, a livable habitat, stimulating learning activity, and time to perform valued tasks in which we excel." In reading this, I made connections to the Catholic Worker tradition.

The Catholic Worker has provided a place for workers and scholars to have access to

these things which we truly want and need. To be a Catholic Worker is to live in opposition to the lies of progress and success for a few in order to help provide abundance through soup, bread and community for all, especially the least among us. Within this book us-two can hear echoes of the wisdom of our co-founders. When Yunkaporta talks about how us-two, as humans, are not made for the societies we live in, that "we are slaves to a work ethic that is unnatural and unnecessary," we hear Peter Maurin encouraging us to "make the kind of society where it is easier for people to be good." We can then hear Dorothy Day calling us to make connections with the least among us when she wrote, "I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least."

Sand Talk afflicts the comfortable with truths that beg our engagement with the depth and breadth of Indigenous knowledge. He does not oversimplify or make it too inaccessible to the reader, but rather leaves the reader

to make further connections. The truths we are seeking are found in the patterns of our world through those suffering and through our earth. I propose that we all read *Sand Talk*, as it can help all of us to expand our worldview to make connections beyond what we had previously thought possible.

This will involve a first step of looking away from the false promises of progress through the lens of the western world, and to look towards the beauty in patterns we find in nature through the lens of Indigenous thinking. To further connect Yunkaporta's scholarship with that of the CW movement us-two must read his book while paying attention to the emphasis on fostering community with one another and cultivating relationship with the land. For now, let's remember that Dr. Cornel West, a beloved advocate of the oppressed, says often that "the condition of truth is to allow suffering to speak." Let us seek to be connected to the ecosystems of suffering around us! ✚



Ade Bethune

Reading *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World* by Tyson Yunkaporta is akin to embarking on a journey with a wise, yet unfamiliar, mentor. Page after page we are asked to enter the narrative, thereby making reading and learning an embodied experience. As readers we are invited to intertwine our stories within the book in a continued process of layering knowledge. Yunkaporta uses language which defies our western individualism and categorical separations by asking us-two to move together. He asks that "Us-two go walking," and says that "Us-two will look."

But even calling these two hundred and fifty-one pages bound together by some kind of adhesive a book does not feel quite right. *Sand Talk* transcends our notions of a book as each page asks and requires us-two over and over to reflect and to rethink our connections with one another. Furthermore, Yunkaporta prepared and wrote this book intentionally retaining indigenous practices which cannot conform to the printed medium of textbooks. Each chapter includes yarnning, carving and sand talk. Yarns are a cultural practice which are "like conversations but take a traditional form we have always used to create and transmit knowledge." The intentionality of creating space to build upon what others have already said is deeply needed in our culture, where so many listen only waiting to respond with their own agenda.

For each chapter he then carves the "logic sequences and ideas arising from these yarns into traditional objects before I translate them into print." Finally he engages in sand talk, "invoking an Aboriginal custom of drawing images on the ground to convey knowledge." Incorporating these methods of communication allows Yunkaporta to write about complicated topics which are meant to be orally taught and allows him to maintain tradition rather than conforming with western ways of obtaining and sharing knowledge.

Throughout *Sand Talk* the reader is gifted

BOOK REVIEW

I WAS A RED PRIEST: Memories and Testimonials by Fr. Jean Boulrier. English translation by Toby Terrar. Red Star Publishing, New York, New York, 2022. Reviewed by Dean Richards.

This book offers through its protagonist a Christian social analysis that is now minimized but was widely held in the post-World War II era and continues to be held by those like Pope Francis who in May 2022 criticized NATO as "barking at Russia's door." The book is the autobiography of Fr. Jean Boulrier, which for the first time has been translated from French into English, complete with newly-added scholarly appendices, indices, graphics and bibliography, so that it is also a reference work.

Fr. Boulrier, who lived from 1894 to 1980, was Professor of Christian Legal Principles at the Institut Catholique of Paris. Over his long life he published multiple scholarly works and his autobiography was one of them. The book, as noted above, is not only about Fr. Boulrier, but a social history of his era from the Christian social perspective. It includes the analyses of theology and philosophy, religious associations and movements, liturgy and sacraments, political parties, trade unions, Jewish affairs, early Christianity, European history and socialist countries and their leaders.

For social Christianity in the post-World War II era, as taught by Fr. Boulrier, the main international peace issue that faced believers was the US-led Cold War, which was waged to take back the advances made by the working class as a result of capitalism's World War II debacle. More specifically, the priest-professor took a stand, based on Christian authority, first against anti-communism. Second, he took a stand against the US atomic policy because it violated the Christian principles of war and peace. Third, he took a stand on the side of social Christianity. He maintained that Christians can be good citizens of the socialist order, but they could not accept the bourgeois state and its fundamental law, the one to which all others finally give in: make money, get rich.

Fr. Boulrier found Marxism compatible with Thomism, ecumenism, mysticism, liturgy and hierarchy. His allies included Cardinal Suhard of Paris and Msgr. Angelo Roncalli, later Pope John XXIII, who in the post-war period was the papal nuncio to France. Dorothy Day, who is being considered for sainthood, articulated the opposition of social Christianity against the warmongering of Cardinal Spellman, the CIA, John Foster Dulles and Harry Truman. In *The Catholic Worker*, Day defended the collaboration of Fr. Boulrier and that of US priests with the communists.

The book describes how Fr. Boulrier's activism began in 1912 when he joined the Jesuits. For twenty years he was with the "Company" and then became a priest of the Parisian clergy. Because of his work on the

side of the Jews in the World War II resistance against the Vichy and Nazi governments, he is now being considered for the title "Righteous Among the Nations" at Yad Vashem in Israel. In 1950, fighting the same interests he faced during the war, he helped write and promote the Stockholm Appeal to prevent nuclear war in Korea. The petition gained 273 million signers, most of whom, as he pointed out, were Christians, not communists. Still later, in 1958 he was convicted of a felony for defaming the French military concerning its conduct in the Algerian War.



Ade Bethune

In the early 1960s from within the peace movement during the Second Vatican Council, Fr. Boulrier worked with theologians Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu, OP and Cardinal Suenens to help it support peace. The language in the constitution *Gaudium et spes* contained the essence of Fr. Boulrier's proposed text: "Every act of war which tends indiscriminately to the destruction of entire cities or vast regions with their inhabitants is a crime against God and against man himself and it must be condemned firmly and without hesitation."

Fr. Boulrier's activism extended into Eastern Europe, where Christians in significant numbers sided with the communists in the post-war period. This included priests, nuns and some bishops. Fr. Boulrier worked with their clerical organizations, including PAX in Poland, the Association of Priests for Peace in Hungary, and the Movement of Patriotic Priests and Catholic Action in Czechoslovakia. They published Fr. Boulrier's writings and sponsored his speaking tours to their countries. Their members held political offices and contributed positively to their socialist societies.

In Fr. Boulrier's view, the interests that supported fascism during World War II sought to unify Europe in order to destroy the communists. Ultimately they won the war. They unified Europe and in time destroyed the USSR. NATO is used to make the world a police state in order to enslave the working class. Believers, including Fr. Boulrier and Pope Francis, resist. ✚

From the Book of Notes

By RIC RHETOR

"We are Easter people, and Alleluia is our song." Is that attributed to Saint Augustine of Hippo, or are we confusing that hopeful acclamation with something from the **Acts of the Apostles**? So easy to mix up our sacred and profane sources on occasion, especially if there is beauty in both. That saying was a favorite of a great guy at the CW who was the soul of probity when he was successfully fighting the demons of drink and the voices that plagued his inmost being—a fine and kool guy with a great sense of humor. He loved Moses' punchline at the burning bush, after God says, "I Am Who Am." "Thanks" he said, "that clears it up!" So funny! Anyhow, the point of mentioning Joe Foth is to remember that during Lent that we do not say "Alleluia" until the Easter Vigil. But that little detail often slipped his mind and we would tease him when he said the "A" word. Oh, we could go on and on about the wit and wisdom of Joe, especially as we count the days to the time when violence, suffering and pain will end and "joy will come in the morning" in the words of the old spiritual.

Ben put together a well-attended journal launch for some friends from Woodbine, an experimental hub in Queens. The audience was large and the energy was high-spirited in January. Thanks, Ben and company and thanks Woodbine, for the yummy refreshments and the readings from **The Reservoir**. One compelling essay is "The Architecture of American Celebrity" by Kevin Gonzalez.

We got a deep dive look at the southern border thanks to Mercy sister and dear friend of some in our community, Betty Campbell. She's there in Ciudad Juarez. Another friend, Scott Wright, last November wrote, "So far this year, 853 migrants have died trying to cross the border. Every day the US violates the right to migrate, as 1.7 million migrants were deported last year." God be with all the migrants and those who help with their crossings. Sister Betty, we pray that your late collaborator, Carmelite priest Peter Hinde, remains spiritually at your side as the walk continues.

Members of the New York State Nurses' Association were on strike at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx and Mount Sinai in Manhattan, from January 9-12. Bernie joined striking nurses on the picket line, noting the great energy and camaraderie. The major reason for the strike was to increase staffing ratios for all patient units. One emergency room nurse told Bernie that she had as many as thirteen or fourteen patients and had to call out names to identify them, apologizing to waiting people saying that some people were sicker than others. The strike was settled on January 12th when the union won safe staffing ratios and salary increases among other concessions from management.

We say goodbye to Debbie, who left St. Joe's near the end of January. She'd been with us for over a year, and has now moved on to the Corpus Christi Catholic Worker in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. But not before attending the March of Life in Washington DC. Debbie was amazing at remembering birthdays and baking cakes! We thank Debbie for all of her work with us and pray that she will be happy in her new CW community.

Myros, a Queens native and junior studying philosophy at SUNY New Paltz, stayed at St. Joseph House for a few weeks during his winter break and was a great help and addition to the community. Myros first showed up to help on the soupline last summer. He loves discussing philosophy and faith, and before long, he was staying all day, working hard wherever we needed him. A fine example of a young worker/scholar, the kind that Peter Maurin wrote of and that we all can aspire to

be. Thanks Myros, and we look forward to seeing you again this summer.

The exploits of Bud and the Filthy Rotten System could fill a paragraph in every issue of this little paper, as they continue to provide music for rallies and demonstrations for all who ask. Their annual concert at the People's Voice Café, now located at Judson Memorial Church, however, is worthy of special notice. First of all, inside the space it is not raining, snowing, too cold or too hot, as it can be at so many of their appearances. The core of the band, sans harpist/vocalist Anthony who was in Cuba (he was meeting up with the peace boat, The Golden Rule, which will visit NYC in May), were joined by former members Dennis and Denise who came in from New Mexico for the gig. Alto saxophonist Liam is a great addition, and special guest artist, vocalist/guitarist Joe Cosgrove, came in from Pennsylvania. Joe might be familiar to readers from his work as a lawyer who's defended everyone from Dan Berrigan to Bud and Carmen. The enthusiastic crowd were up and dancing in the aisles. Rock on, Bud!

We were delighted to have Brian Terrell visiting with us before and after heading to Washington, DC for the annual Witness Against Torture vigil to shut down the prison at Guantánamo Bay (See Frida Berrigan's article on page 1). We also had an all too brief visit with Meg Broadhead, who stopped by on a Friday afternoon. She was in town to attend Geoff Gneuh's lecture on the painter Velasquez. Jane had the pleasure of seeing her godson Sakke Turner who came down to the city for a visit from the zen monastery in Vermont.

We have had some lively Friday Night Meetings including the roundtable of former Catholic Worker editors, organized by Dan Mauk, which attracted many beloved alumni of the movement including Kathleen and Pat Jordan, Robert Ellsberg, Linda and David Mastrodonato (on their wedding anniversary!), Sabra McKenzie-Hamilton, Lucia Russet and Siobhan O'Neil. Robbie Gamble was unable to attend but sent a wonderful letter to share. The spirit was convivial and the sharing was generous.

Some of us were honored to join Tom H. and his brother and sister at the Mass of Resurrection for their mother Loretta. Her death was followed soon after the death of Jessica's brother, Robert, whose funeral many of us also attended in Queens. Eternal rest grant unto them, oh God, and may perpetual light shine upon them.

Many of us had the chance to attend the fourteenth annual Spiritual Sounds gathering held this year at the Russian Orthodox cathedral on East Second Street. While some of the usual congregations were unable to attend, we especially missed the Bhakti Center and Lama Pema from the Nechung Foundation, there was no shortage of joy in the room. Anthony Donovan, the organizer of this spectacular evening, reminded us that in difficult times it is especially important to be together in this way.

We had a raucous, joy-filled visit with some young people from Fairfield, Connecticut. Tré Kayumba began a program there called Fairfield Yabantu which does anti-racism work through education, advocacy and youth empowerment, and brought some members of their Youth Center for a day of service. *Yabantu* is a Zulu term that means "for the people" and they truly embodied that! They made pancakes (and ate them, too), helped with the newspaper and engaged in thoughtful discussion about the art in the auditorium and what it means to be of service. We were so grateful for their laughter and energy. Come back soon!

And now for some words of neighborhood good cheer! A few blocks from Maryhouse is a beloved family business called Essex Card Shop. If you stopped in for pens or postcards or what not you would be treated to the spiritual guidance of the manager, Jayant Patel, in the form of photocopies with sayings about happiness. Sadly, in January of 2022, the entire store was destroyed in a fire. Immediately there was an outpouring of love and support from the neighborhood, a beautiful testament to the owner, Muhammad Aslam, and his family. Today we write to say the store has reopened! We are thrilled and look forward to many more years of buying our supplies there.

The problem is that we humans seem to want it all. For example, there's that great lecture on Kropotkin at the anarchist book club, but it is at the same time as the free and open to the public art exhibit over near Union Square. What to do? Some CWers who remember Dorothy claim she viewed this desire to do it all as particularly American, but no one wants to put money on it. It seems she thought that some activists during the Vietnam war era wanted to do several things at once, like getting arrested and going off to prison, but still be around for mundane household duties. Of course, Dorothy felt the responsibility of going to prison was paramount for many in the peace movement, a matter of integrity. But there was a need to prioritize obligations and staying out of prison might be a greater act of discipline even though going in for the right reasons is undoubtedly still considered among the finest acts of courage.

Our nearest and dearest Martha and Carmen, plus others of the Kings Bay Plowshares are no longer in prison. They continue doing the good work on the outside, especially keeping up with the Yemen vigil each Saturday at Union Square. There are so many demonstrations in New York on any given day that this is sort of the proof in the pudding. We need not to depress ourselves because we just can't do it all, nor should we want to.

How Did This Happen?

By EMMANUEL CHARLES McCARTHY

A report from the **Religion News Service** in November 2022 stated, "America's newest cardinal called on his fellow bishops to challenge lawmakers who want to cut Ukraine aid, urging prelates to speak out against leaders in the next Congress angling to reduce US support for the country as it battles Russian invaders."

"Cardinal Robert McElroy of San Diego, who was elevated by Pope Francis in August, offered his challenge Wednesday (Nov. 16) after the bishops heard a presentation on the situation in Ukraine by Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop Borys Gudziak, who oversees the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Borys Gudziak detailed the horrific devastation wrought by Russia's invasion, telling personal stories and showing images of the destruction."

"After Bishop Gudziak finished, Cardinal McElroy went to the microphone on the assembly floor. Nonviolence is important regarding issues of war and peace, he said, but the situation in Ukraine 'is an instance where justice requires resistance.' He then warned that some incoming members of Congress have stoked 'rumblings of cutting support to Ukraine from the United States.'"

"That could be very ominous in terms of the continuity, the flow of weapons and support, that is essential to convincing the Russians that they cannot succeed," Cardinal McElroy said. 'I would urge the conference to make it a very high priority to move quickly to preempt, in all the ways available to us, any moves in our national policy in that direction.' As he finished, his fellow bishops burst into applause."

How did a Ukrainian bishop get on the agenda of the bishops' national meeting in the first place in order to tell the wrenching and true story of the sufferings of the Ukrainian people? Why was not a Russian bishop also invited to tell the wrenching and true story of the sufferings of the Russian people? Is it morally permissible to get one's information about a war that the US is involved in only from the US media and then apply the Catholic Just War Theory to it as a way of morally validating it? Does not the pursuit of justice demand hearing, studying, analyzing and praying?

Were there any Catholic bishops present who did not stand up and applaud Cardinal McElroy's intervention from the floor for more homicidal gadgets and gizmos to be sent to President Zelensky and company? Who, among the Catholic bishops present, thought that Cardinal McElroy's impassioned plea to the US Catholic bishops was pastorally destructive—a bold-faced public rejection of the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels? It seemed also a blatant betrayal of the great commission given by Jesus to the apostles and their successors: "Go therefore...and teach them to obey all that I have commanded you." (Mt. 28:20)

Did any Bishop call into question the moral validity of what Cardinal McElroy had just said publicly as a bishop and as a baptized Christian? Did it even enter into the scope of Cardinal McElroy's moral evaluation as a Christian and as a bishop that parties on all sides of the mutual slaughter in the Ukraine are, like himself, members of the Body of Christ? We are under a specific divine mandate and command to "Love your enemies," in the model that Jesus loved His enemies, and to "Love one another as I have loved you."

The power of perception of people who live in a system of deception is darkened. A person living within such a system can no longer see what otherwise would be routinely obvious. A person cannot respond as he or she should to what they cannot see or can only perceive vaguely through the manufactured fog of systematic deceit.

Since Cardinal McElroy's diocese, San Diego, has the largest naval base in the world, the largest ship and submarine building program on the West Coast and exists in a local economy where the military provides twenty-five percent of the GDP and provides twenty-three percent of the total jobs and that abounds in civilian defense contractors, maybe he has an excuse for not seeing that truth is the first casualty of war, for not seeing that the US media is not the place to get honest and accurate information about a US war.

But what about all the other Catholic bishops present who rose in unison and gave him and his thoughts a rousing standing ovation? Did they all think that what they had just heard was what Jesus would have said to the members of His body, to His disciples and therefore they with one heart rose to their feet and gave it a non-verbal "Amen"?

Or was this a pre-planned and choreographed US Catholic Episcopal theatrical performance staged not to reveal and witness to the holiness and love of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, but rather to keep the institutional Church in the good pseudo-graces of the serpentine and deceitful system of the worlds from which is orchestrated all wars, all oppression, all indifference to relievable suffering and all divisions within the human family?



Julie Lonneman

Guantánamo Is Still Open

(continued from page 1)

The massive headquarters of US war-making was busy in the dawn hours. There was a queue of more than one hundred Pentagon workers waiting to get through security as we walked by. Our mournful silence, somber faces and "Shut Down Guantánamo" signs let them all know this was not just another manic Monday.

We sang, "Courage, Muslim brothers, you do not walk alone, we will walk with you, and sing your spirit home." The moon was nearly full, hanging bright in the sky as it got lighter and lighter. Facing the Pentagon, we watched the War Department turn from gray to an almost salmon pink in the early morning sun that rose over our shoulders during our hour of witness.

"Courage, Muslim brothers, we seek your liberty. We will stand with you, until we all are free." I found myself hoping that our plaintive song would be an earworm, niggling into the brains of all who heard it. I imagined the workers—an enlisted woman in khaki and heavy boots, a maintenance man in his green and brown uniform, an office worker in ungainly heels—humming to themselves as they mopped or made copies or put graphics into PowerPoint presentations.

Later that day, I stood shoulder to shoulder with a dozen other people dressed in orange jumpsuits and black hoods, the afternoon sun pouring through the little holes in my hood. More often now, the public who passed by as we stood in front of the Capitol murmured, "Guantánamo? What's that?" or "I thought that closed a long time ago!"

Guantánamo is still open, and British journalist and campaigner Andy Worthington gave us the snapshot of "progress" on emptying the prison. He noted:

- 779 men have been held at the prison since it opened on January 11, 2002.

- Under the administration of President George W. Bush, 532 men were released.

- The Obama administration released 196.

- One man was transferred out of Guantánamo in spite of President Trump's obstructionism and Islamophobia during his time behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office.

- So far, nearly two years into the Biden administration, five men have departed from Guantánamo.

"Not good enough," Worthington said. After presenting all the numbers and the data and a rapid-fire recounting of the myriad ways in which the Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden administrations have failed the men at Guantánamo, their families and the rule of law, Worthington dropped this wisdom: In choosing to establish the "war on terror" prison at the US Naval base at Guantánamo twenty-one years ago, "the United States created a category of humans who have no rights."

He meant that many of the hundreds of men released from Guantánamo face a whole new set of problems once they depart. For many, it is a tenuous sort of freedom, leaving Guantánamo for uncertain and difficult futures in third nations where they are sometimes viewed as objects of fear and scrutiny. Many live far from their families, without passports or a way of earning a living. And there is no one in the United States who is responsible for safeguarding their rights or resolving the many issues that arise for them in new and unfamiliar countries.

This issue has been recently reported on by *The Intercept* and other outlets. Mansoor Adayfi, a Yemeni man imprisoned at Guantánamo for more than fourteen years, is now living in Serbia. Adayfi, the author of the recently published *Don't Forget Us Here* (See CW Jan-Feb, 2022), told *The Intercept*, "Guantánamo doesn't leave you as soon as you say: Hi, goodbye. Nope, it hasn't finished with you yet. So we still live in Guantánamo 2.0."

Over all these years, there is plenty of blame to go around. But now, at the beginning of 2023, Worthington laid responsibility for closing Guantánamo—and transferring the men cleared for release out of the island prison—squarely at the feet of the current president, Joe Biden.

"Biden and [Secretary of State] Blinken need to accept responsibility," Worthington said. "They have two more years to get this done."

Andy Worthington's website is a rich trove of information, analysis and connection to the wider Close Guantánamo movement. Worthington calls on campaigners to focus on the cases of Moath Al-Alwi and Khalid Qasim in particular, two artists who have been cleared for release. They need the United States to arrange for safe settlement in new countries, as US law bars them from returning to their home in Yemen.

Al-Alwi was one of the first men brought to Guantánamo. A self taught and gifted artist, who makes fanciful models of boats, his work has been shown at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and was featured in a *New York Times* op-doc and elsewhere. In 2015, he penned a letter published in *Al Jazeera*, writing: "I hear the war in Afghanistan is over. This war was supposedly the reason I remained trapped, rotting in this endless horror at Guantánamo Bay. I write this letter today to ask: if this war has ended, why am I still here? Why has nothing changed?"

Qasim was only twenty-five when he was captured on his first trip outside of his home country and ended up in Guantánamo. There he paints vividly alive sea scenes and abstracts that express his deep frustration at his imprisonment. He has been at the prison for about half his life, and has spent seven years of his imprisonment on hunger strikes in protest.

Dr. Maha Hilal, a researcher, organizer and author of *Innocent Until Proven Muslim*, has called for deeper analysis and a rejection of the false narratives and facile tropes of Guantánamo as a stain on our moral fabric or a recruiting tool for global jihadists. As she writes, "For a start, Americans must face that they endorsed forcing hundreds of Muslim men and boys into a dehumanizing prison, where torture was de rigueur, to provide themselves with a fleeting sense of safety—and then chose to look away as the abuses and innocence of many prisoners were exposed."

James Yee is also somber. The former Army Muslim chaplain to the men at Guantánamo, shared his fear that Guantánamo will close "with the death of the last man held there." But even as he was not optimistic about the Biden administration's courage around Guantánamo, he rekindled our hope anew by reminding us that someone can hold onto their morals and humanity even when deployed to what Adayfi called the "place created outside of our humanity." Yee paid a high price for that moral fortitude and writes about his experience of arrest, solitary confinement and ultimate exoneration and honorable discharge from the military in his memoir *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire*.

With this wisdom in our ears, we started out on the two-mile trek to the White House, single file, our vision obscured by the hood, aided in navigation by the hardest working activists. By not donning the hoods and jumpsuits, they sign up for a tough assignment: part chaperone, part guard, part leafleter, part photographer, part police liaison, part public interpreter.

The walk seems to get longer every year, and marching along and singing under the black hood definitely left me winded and tired by the time we reached Lafayette Park across from the White House. But there was more to our day. We were met at the park by more activists and friends, and in short order were assembled as a line of thirty-five figures in orange jumpsuits and black hoods, each holding the name of one of the thirty-five men who remain at Guantánamo. Banners with messages like "Close Guantánamo" and "Justice for Guantánamo Survivors" lay on the ground.

Our "only-in-Lafayette-Park-moment" of the year occurred when the imam was offering a beautiful closing prayer without the benefit of a sound system just as someone out on Pennsylvania Avenue had cued up "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" by the Rolling Stones at a teeth shuddering volume.

It was distracting and annoying, but it occurs to me that it is a good anthem for the long frustration of twenty-one years of Guantánamo—and sixteen years of coming to the White House to mark January 11th as a day of national shame. Maybe not the whole song, but at least the "Cause I try, and I try, and I try, and I try" part. ✦

Black Art & The Met

More than fifty years ago, Thomas Hoving, head of the Metropolitan Museum, opened his misguided show "Harlem on My Mind." He said Harlem was on his mind because he saw it often from his limousine on the way to work. The Black Emergency Cultural Coalition protested the lack of representation of Black artists in the show.

Since that debacle, the museum has been committed to more Black art. A big problem has been getting museums to think about Black art as fine art instead of as anthropology, as is the American Indian art in the Museum of Natural History, which holds virtually all works of art as anonymous. Recently I saw three exhibitions of Black art at the Met.

The first, a show called "Fictions of Emancipation: Carpeaux Recast," closed on March 5th. It was a sort of tribute to the marble bust titled "Why Born Enslaved!" by French sculptor Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, conceived in 1868, carved in 1873, and bought by the Met in 2019. That work is a stunning, semi-nude female bust expressing the complex emotions deriving from just that question, of why she was born enslaved. It's positively heroic. Carpeaux's sculpture and a plaster study for it are here surrounded by good comparisons of paintings and sculptures by male and female artists, Black and white, related to the bust in quite a few different ways. For example, there's a nice small bronze sculpture of a male lying prone by Bartholdi, the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty; it's owned by the Met but I've never seen it before.

The two other shows are up indefinitely, and are about how Black history is told. "The African Origin of Civilization" is a show that raises interesting questions. Yes, it's a known fact that all the present races of humanity originally came from Africa. But comparing ancient Egyptian art with even later arts from the whole African continent seems too vague to convince me. Such basic human postures as a husband standing next to a shorter wife with his arm over her shoulders may or may not really pertain to a specific place or time. The question is up in the air but the exhibit includes terrific African sculptures.

More to the contemporary point is a partly archeological and partly postmodern exhibit called "Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room." The idea is to make a period room using artefacts dug up archeologically behind the present museum in Central Park. There Seneca Village once stood: a largely Black settlement that, when Central Park was constructed in the mid-1800s, got evicted and destroyed. You do see some archeological "finds" from that site. Striking to me, is a hard-rubber lady's hair comb, ornamented with links of a chain. But everything here is subjected to what can only be called a postmodern spirit. It is a carnival-like display of Afrofuturism with post-Pop Art visual mixes of the tacky and the noble, with raucous, fast-lane video images, etc. As a whole, the room looks a little forced. There is also a problem in making a "period room" at all. Like, say, the Met's living room from the Craig House in Baltimore, of c. 1810, which probably had been kept tidy by slaves. But nobody could say that this ensemble doesn't look free!

—Joe Masheck

FREE LEONARD PELTIER

Leonard Peltier's enduring and courageous struggle for justice and reparations for Indigenous people is now reaching a dramatic turning point. Falsely connected to the deaths of two agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) during a shootout on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in 1975, he has been held in prison for the last forty-seven years. Peltier has always maintained his innocence. Amnesty International has stated that he is being held as a political prisoner by the US government. United Nations experts have called for his immediate release. Peltier's conviction at the 1977 murder trial has been criticized by legal experts as rife with irregularities and due process violations. In spite of all this, all his legal appeals for either transfer to a prison in Minnesota to be near his family or for outright clemency have been adamantly refused. Peltier is now elderly and suffers from many health care issues and needs to use a walker. Why have the US government and the FBI been so vindictive toward Leonard Peltier?

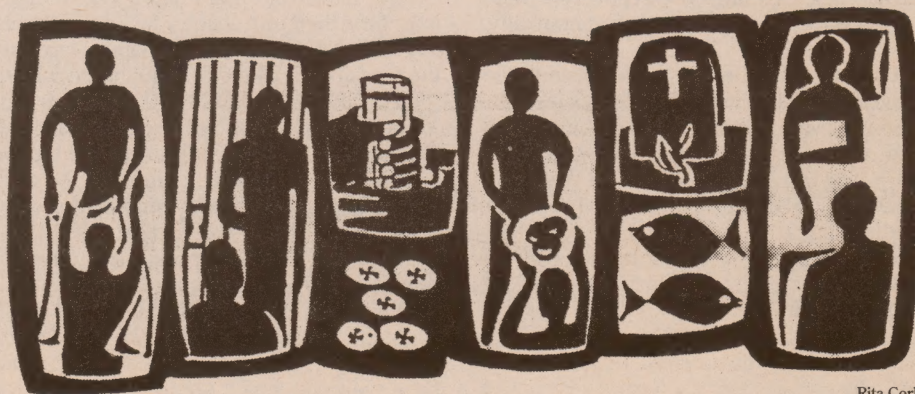
Coleen Rowley, a retired FBI special agent who was involved with Leonard Peltier's case for fourteen years, provides us a partial answer with her recent open letter to President Biden. She writes, "Retribution seems to have emerged as the primary if not sole reason for continuing what looks from the outside to have become an emotion-driven 'FBI Family' vendetta." Rowley continues, "The focus of my two cents leading to my joining the call for clemency is based on Peltier's inordinately long prison sentence and an ever more compelling need for simple mercy due to his advanced age and deteriorating health. Enough is enough. Leonard Peltier should now be allowed to go home."

In a later interview with *The Guardian* Rowley elaborated further, saying that for years now new FBI recruits are indoctrinated with the FBI version of events: "The facts are murky and I'm not going to say either version is correct. I wasn't there. But I do know if you really care about justice, then the real issue now is mercy, truth and reconciliation. To keep this going for almost fifty years really shows you the level of vindictiveness the organization has for Leonard Peltier. The bottom line is there are all kinds of problems in the intelligence service which by and large never get corrected for the same reasons: group conformity, pride and unwillingness to admit mistakes, so systemic problems are covered up and never fixed."

Nick Estes, an assistant professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota, refers to Rowley's support for clemency in *The Guardian* article as "historic." According to him, she "is trying to dispel a myth that is deeply embedded into the culture of the FBI... handed down through indoctrinating young recruits such as Rowley about Peltier's unquestionable guilt and the FBI's supposed blamelessness during the reign of terror on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation." Nick Estes is a volunteer with the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee and readers can go to their website for more information or to make a contribution.

—Bill Griffin

You can write a letter of support to
Leonard Peltier #89637-132,
USP Coleman I, PO Box 1033
Coleman, Florida 33521.



Rita Corbin

War Crimes Tribunal

By KATHY KELLY

Days after a US warplane bombed a Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, killing forty-two people, twenty-four of them patients, the international president of MSF, Dr. Joanne Liu walked through the wreckage and prepared to deliver condolences to family members of those who had been killed. A brief video, taped in October, 2015, captures her nearly unutterable sadness as she speaks about a family who, the day before the bombing, were prepared to bring their daughter home. Doctors had helped the child recover, but because war was raging outside the hospital, the hospital administrators recommended that the family wait. "Let her stay here, we told them," Dr. Liu recalled. "She will be safe."

The child was among those killed by the US attacks, which recurred at fifteen minute intervals for about an hour, even though MSF had already issued desperate pleas begging the United States and NATO forces to stop bombing the hospital.

In the Lenten season of 2022, Dr. Liu's sad observations seemed to echo in the words of Pope Francis. The Pope teamed up with Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa calling on powerful warmakers to repent. They focused on Pilate, who could have upheld the goodness and moral courage of Jesus but instead walked away, muttering "What is truth?" Pope Francis raised a lament: "We live with this diabolic pattern of killing one another out of the desire for power, the desire for security, the desire for many things. But I think of the hidden wars, those no one sees, that are far away from us," he said. "People speak about peace. The United Nations has done everything possible, but they have not succeeded. I go back to Calvary. There, Jesus did everything. With mercy, with goodness, he tried to convince the leaders, but no: war, war, war against him!"

On Calvary, Jesus did everything. Embracing such sacrifice, Phil Berrigan, a prophet of our time, begged people to persist in vigorous struggle to stop the gigantic swindles perpetrated by war makers. "Oppose any and all wars," Phil urged. "There has never been a just war." "Don't get tired!" he added, and then quoted a Buddhist proverb, "I will not kill, but I will prevent others from killing."

Drawing on Phil Berrigan's steadfastness, activists worldwide are planning the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal. The Tribunal, to be held November 10-13, 2023, intends to present evidence about crimes against humanity committed by those who develop, store and sell weapons used to afflict people trapped in war zones. Testimony is being sought from the survivors of wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Gaza and Somalia, to name but a few of the places where US weapons have terrified people who've meant us no harm.

On November 10, 2022, organizers of the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal and their supporters served a subpoena to the corporate offices and corporate directors of weapons manufacturers Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, and General Atomics. The subpoena which expired on February 10, 2023, compels them to provide to the Tribunal all documents revealing their complicity in aiding and abetting the United States government to commit war crimes, crimes against humanity, bribery, and theft.

Organizers of the campaign will continue monthly pre-Tribunal actions exposing allegations of war crimes committed by weapon manufacturers. Campaigners are guided by the ringing testimony of Dr. Cornel West: "We render you, corporations obsessed with war profiteering, accountable and answerable!"

In his lifetime, Phil Berrigan evolved from soldier to scholar to prophetic anti-nuclear activist. He astutely linked racial oppression to the suffering caused by militarism. Likening racial injustice to a terrible hydra that contrives a new face for every area of



Susan McMurdy

the world, Phil wrote in **No More Strangers** that the dispassionate decision of US people to practice racial discrimination made it "not only easy but logical to enlarge our oppressions in the form of international nuclear threats."

People menaced by the hydra's new faces of war often have nowhere to flee, nowhere to hide. Thousands upon thousands of the victims are children. Mindful of the children who've been maimed, traumatized, displaced, orphaned and killed by wars raging in our lifetimes, we must hold ourselves accountable as well. Phil Berrigan's challenge must become ours: "Meet me at the Pentagon!" Or its corporate outposts. Humanity cannot live in complicity with the patterns that lead to bombing hospitals and slaughtering children.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

The voice of conscience of a number of veterans of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) rang out unambiguously last December in a small, modest storefront on East Third Street, just down the block from Maryhouse. An extraordinary multimedia installation was opened there for perusal by the general public for no charge. Ten tv-sized screens played interviews with different IDF veterans on a continuous loop. Each interview lasted about ten to fifteen minutes. Two folding chairs before each screen allowed random passersby to come in off Third Street and sit down and listen to the testimonies. Each described personal participation in the daily humiliations and brutalities inflicted on Palestinians by the now fifty-year-long military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip by Israel. The cumulative effect of listening to just two or three of the testimonies was overwhelming. I had to return several times during the week-long exhibition in order to take in most of the testimonies.

The high-tech installation was staffed by several young ex-IDF veterans. Their demonstrative moral intensity and dedication to the cause of peace was unquestionable. The effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Moral Injury being suffered by all those giving testimonies were unspoken but palpable. The feeling that this nonviolent, artistic and political endeavor was a contribution to healing on the journey to peace was also unmistakable.

The truth that five million Palestinians must have their own country for Israel to avoid degrading itself into a total police state was the crystal clear takeaway from the exhibition. Well-produced booklets with sober graphics and photographs entitled, for example, "Occupying Hebron" were available for the taking. Here is the text, printed on the wall, which greeted the many people who were drawn in to explore the installation:

"Breaking The Silence is an organization of veteran Israeli soldiers who collect and publish testimonies from soldiers who served in the occupied Palestinian territories. We do this to stimulate discourse about the price paid for a reality in which young soldiers face a

civilian population on a daily basis and are engaged in the violent control of that population's daily life.

"Breaking The Silence was founded in 2004 by recently discharged Israeli ex-combatants who believe that every Israeli citizen must know what is being done in their names in the occupied Palestinian territories. As a way of sharing their experiences they developed a photography exhibition, 'Breaking The Silence—Israeli Soldiers Speak Out,' about the occupied Palestinian territories, which featured photographs they had taken alongside video testimonies from over sixty soldiers. The exhibition was shown in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and was displayed at the Israeli Parliament in July 2004. The exhibition has since been shown in dozens of places around the world..."

"This new exhibition which we are inaugurating here features video testimonies from 1967 until today. The video testimonies are cut thematically according to the following themes: Restriction of Movement; Settlers and Settlements; Arrests and Detentions; Home Invasions; Deportations and Razings; Looting; Violence; Children; Opening Fire and Deaths and Bodies. The themes cut across time periods, geographical locations and military units, showcasing how we are not dealing with, 'exceptional cases' or with 'a few bad apples,' but rather that these are the inevitable mechanisms of occupying millions of people with a military force. Breaking The Silence was created under the guidance of two of Israel's most highly regarded artists Miki Kratsman and Avi Mograbi."

The sober, non-sensationalistic atmosphere surrounding the Breaking The Silence exhibition made it very moving and worth being seen and experienced by all who believe in the promotion of nonviolence and peace. It reminded me of the testimonies given by US military veterans during The Winter Soldier Conference held in Detroit in 1971. Organized then by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, that conference (which was filmed) contributed to bringing a desperately needed end to that twenty-year-long horrific conflict. For more information about the organization behind this powerful exhibition or to make a financial donation to support its dissemination, go to breakingthesilence.org.il

—Bill Griffin



Susan McMurdy

TRAUMA & HEALING

Ione, California

Dear Friends,

In the first four months of 2022, two friends lost loved ones to random acts of violence, one perpetrated by a man recently released from jail. Though I am incarcerated, news of these events wounded my spirit—I am still a person, capable of feeling compassion for others who suffer.

Some of us come to our senses and search out causes of our criminal thinking to identify faults, heal and make amends. I started seminary in prison in the Urban Ministry Institute's program, determined to build a new life. Six years later I serve in an ecumenical community dedicated to fostering recovery.

Some don't choose to pursue recovery. Violence tends to follow them. Members of society hurt by that violence angrily question rehabilitation, some favor warehousing as a solution; we no longer warrant treatment as human beings. Beliefs like these, in and out of prison, set the stage for all kinds of abusive behavior.

Jesus steps into this fray with three stories in **Luke** Chapter 15: the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Two Sons. The first story teaches that retrieving that which is lost requires more than diligent searching. It is a one-on-one task that entails risk; you must abandon what you are doing to go after one who is lost. In the second story, recovery of a single lost coin, representing one lost soul saved, is reason enough in heaven to drop everything and shout Alleluia!

Yet settling that sheep back into the fold presents new problems. Returning sheep suffer trauma just like their victims. In the third story from **Luke**, the Prodigal Son wants to return on his own terms, as a servant. His father thinks of him as his beloved son, returned from death. The older brother wants no part of this reunion. The story ends with homecoming—the father, like us, must shepherd reconciliation starting the day after.

It takes enormous strength to love angry, grieving victims and confused offenders back into community, but healing will only occur there. Dorothy Day reminds readers in "Comforted So That We Can Bring Comfort" (**Magnificat**, January 2022, p163), that the word "Compassion" derives from the Latin root meaning "to suffer with."

The problem is immense. Two million people are incarcerated in the US, another six million are on parole. To include their victims, double those numbers. Many of these traumatized people are not able to realize their worth as children of God unless we go after them, one by one, to show them God's unconditional love.

Brian Warner

"We, the Catholic Church in America, are an Easter people, so let us be an Easter People! We already have everything we need. We have the fullness of life in Christ through the sacraments. We have the height and breadth and depth and width of the Church's teaching. We have the divinely inspired Word of God, the witness of the saints, the deposit of faith, and the guidance of the successors of the apostles. If we are willing to acknowledge and are willing to put in the work to begin to counteract the effects of racism, if we are willing to work for the coming of the kingdom, then we will see new life spring up all around us, and our nation and culture will be transformed by God's work among us. We are ready-made for this work. We, dear friends, were made for exactly such a time as this."

—Marcia Lane-McGee and Shannon Wimp Schmidt
Fat Luther, Slim Pickin's: A Black Catholic Celebration of Faith, Tradition, and Diversity